



Grass Routes

Washington State Rural Transportation Newsletter

Summer 2003

Transportation Package Expands Public Transportation Grant Programs

The Washington State Legislature passed a 10-year transportation funding plan and proposed new taxes to support a multitude of projects. Governor Gary Locke signed the legislation into law on May 19, 2003. House and Senate legislators and business leaders joined the governor at the bill signing ceremony. Locke said, "This legislation will improve road safety, speed up commutes, improve freight mobility across the state, replace four auto ferries, and improve public transportation and passenger rail."

With a great deal of help from transit and non-profit agencies to identify needs and opportunities, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) secured over \$250 million in state public transportation funding over the next ten years.

Almost all the public transportation funds will go to grants including an expansion in the existing Rural Mobility Grant Program and new programs for ParaTransit/Special Needs, Vanpools, and Commute Trip Reduction. "With these grant programs, the legislature has provided us an opportunity to define the state's role in public transportation," says Cathy Silins, Manager of WSDOT's Public Transportation and Commute Options Office. "I look forward to implementing the programs and identifying the impacts of the state investments."

For 2003-2005, the new transportation funding provides:

- ❑ \$4 million for new **ParaTransit/Special Needs Grants**. Nonprofit providers statewide are competing for these funds that are for additional services only.
- ❑ \$14 million for new **ParaTransit/Special Needs Grants**. Transit agencies statewide are eligible for these formula-based grants. The funds must be used solely for additional services for special needs transportation for persons who, because of their age (youth or seniors); disabilities; or income status, are unable to provide or purchase their own transportation.
- ❑ \$1.5 million for new **Commute Trip Reduction Grants**. The funds are available to public agencies, nonprofit organizations, developers, and property managers that provide financial incentives to employees for ridesharing, using public transportation, car sharing, or using nonmotorized commuting. This program is aligned with a \$4.5 million business and occupation tax credit.
- ❑ \$10 million in new **Rural Mobility Grants**. This program provides a lifeline for many rural citizens who rely on public transportation to hold jobs and maintain their independence. \$6 million will be provided to rural and small city transit agencies on a formula basis to equalize disparity in local tax collection; and \$4 million will be awarded through a competitive



State grants improve mobility for residents across the state.

grant process to providers in areas where public transportation is limited or does not exist.

- ❑ \$4 million for a new **Vanpool Grant Program**. The grant program is available to public transit agencies for capital costs only.
- ❑ \$3 million for the city of Seattle for the **Seattle streetcar project on South Lake Union**.

To find out who is competing for 2003-2005 public transportation grants and who is awarded project funding, visit our web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit.

Inside This Issue

Grant Application Update.....	2
Public Transportation Conference...	2
New PT&R Director	3
Jim Slakey Retires	3
Rider Tidbits	4
Mason's Job Access Van.....	5
Biodiesel Fuel	5
APTA Award Nomination	6
C-TRAN's Connector Service	6
Lillian Hyde Shuttle	7
ACCT's New Goals	7
Event Calendar	8

Awarding Grants – New Money, New Challenge

By Jerry Ayres, WSDOT

With strong legislative support, our public transportation grant programs received increased state funding through the recently enacted Washington State Transportation Budget. This gave us all the information needed to complete the task of awarding projects for the 2003-2005 State and Federal Grant Programs.

Transportation budget bill language presented new challenges including direction on how some of the funds can be used (for program details see the front page article about the new transportation package). We turned to transit, non-profit

providers, and legislative staff for help in making sure that legislative intent will be fulfilled through the projects that receive funding over the next 2-year cycle. Because this funding represents the first biennial round of the legislature's 10-year transportation package, we recognize our collective value in showing success through projects that meet criteria and serve public need.

Those of you who submitted grant applications in October just wanted to know two things, "Did I get the grant?" and "When will project funding begin?" Answering

the first question became our primary focus. My staff and I confirmed eligibility against project ranking, double-checked the numbers, and began sending award letters in May. The second question was easy—grant funding becomes available on July 1, 2003, day one of the 2003-2005 biennium.

It's been a long process for us all. With federal and state funding in place, we finally had all the pieces to complete the puzzle. Thanks for your patience!

2003 Public Transportation and Commute Options Conference

By Debra Mendoza, WSDOT

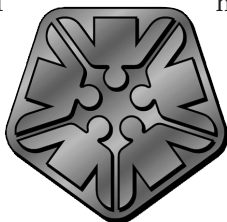
Planning for the 27th Annual Washington State Public Transportation and Commute Options Conference is underway. The Washington State Department of Transportation will host the conference at the DoubleTree Hotel in Spokane, Washington on August 25-27, 2003.

The conference is an annual event that draws approximately 400 to 500 attendees involved with planning and providing public transportation and transportation demand management services within the state. Participants include staff from local transit authorities, community-based nonprofit agencies, local governments, regional planning organizations, equipment vendors, employer organizations, and state and federal agencies.

This year's conference will be packed with information and networking

opportunities to help you continue to meet the mobility needs of the people of Washington State. To highlight the state bus rodeo, the opening lunch will be held at the competition site. We will hold preconference training and workshops to provide valuable knowledge and tools and will honor Washington's best and brightest at the Recognition and Awards Banquet. Invited keynote speakers are Gordon Price, City Councilor for Vancouver, B.C., and Jenna Dorn, Administrator for Federal Transit Administration.

For additional information about the conference, visit our web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit/conference. To request a preliminary program and registration form, contact Debra Mendoza, Conference Manager, at (360) 705-7923 or by e-mail at mendozd@wsdot.wa.gov.



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Giniger Appointed as Director of WSDOT's Public Transportation and Rail Division

Washington State Secretary of Transportation, Doug MacDonald, recently announced the appointment of Judy Giniger as the Director of the Public Transportation and Rail Division.



Judy Giniger

Giniger, a West Seattle resident, joined the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) in 2001, and has served in a series of management positions. In 2001 she acted as director of the Aviation Division, initiating a reorganization based on vigorous outreach to customers among general aviation pilots, small airports, and other flying

activists. She then served as interim director of the entire department's Finance and Administration Division. Next, and most recently, she has coordinated WSDOT's projects with Sound Transit, with particular attention to smooth progress on the many projects that are helping to build Sound Transit's Regional Express bus system.

MacDonald expects WSDOT's public transportation and rail activities to become even stronger components of the state's overall approach to balanced transportation investment. This area includes WSDOT's support for Amtrak *Cascades* service, for freight railroads throughout the state, for grants and assistance to transit agencies, and support for vanpooling and park-and-ride initiatives. "Judy is the right leader for this job. She has a proven ability to foster and lead

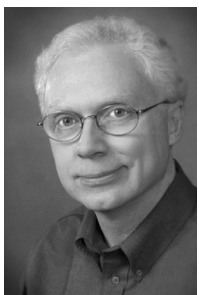
change within WSDOT and to forge strong alliances with other agencies," notes MacDonald. "Just as people are seeing at Washington State Ferries and in our Aviation activities, we will show a new vitality and commitment to accountability and delivery of transportation improvements that benefit our public transit and rail arenas."

Prior to joining WSDOT, Giniger served as the Assistant Director for Driver Services at the Department of Licensing. She has a law degree from University of Idaho, and masters and bachelors degrees in anthropology.

"I'm excited about this opportunity to improve partnerships that result in integrated transportation services and improvements throughout the state," noted Giniger. She will start her new position in June. She replaces Jim Slakey, who retired in April.

All Aboard, Next Stop "Retirement"!

Jim Slakey was always attracted to buses and trains. He started his career driving buses full of tourists in Yosemite National Park. From there, he went on to



Jim Slakey

manage the Unitrans bus system in Davis, California, and Intercity Transit in Olympia, Washington. After 17 years with the Washington State Department of Transportation, Jim retired in April 2003 as the Director of Public Transportation and Rail Division.

During his last ten years with WSDOT, Jim was responsible for policy development and program delivery in all aspects of public transportation, transportation demand management, freight rail, and passenger rail. Jim played a major role in the development and evolution of many programs including High Capacity Transportation, Rural Mobility, Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation, and Commute Trip Reduction. Under Jim's direction, projects such as the incremental development of the Amtrak *Cascades*, the renovation plans for the King Street Station, and the establishment of the Grain Trains and Fruit Express began.

Jim's commitment to public transportation continues in his retirement. This summer, he has an action-packed schedule. Jim will continue to volunteer at Amtrak's Centennial Station in Olympia and plans to stay involved in the renovation of the King Street Station in Seattle. He is booked all summer long as a travel guide aboard Amtrak's *Empire Builder* from Seattle to Montana and on Amtrak's *Coast Starlight* from Seattle to Los Angeles. Jim will also be the Master of Ceremonies for this year's Wall of Fame Awards at the Public Transportation and Commute Options Conference in Spokane.

For some balance, Jim has summer plans that don't include buses and trains. Between Mariners games, he will continue teaching swimming as a volunteer at the Briggs YMCA, spend time at his new beach house, and take a cruise to Alaska with his wife and siblings.

Look Out For The Bus!

In Ambridge, Pa., a 20-year-old man on his way to an eye doctor's appointment was injured when he accidentally walked into the side of a transit bus.

-- Universal Press Syndicate

Rider Tidbits

“Ed”

Ed has faced health problems his entire life and, for the most part, has faced them alone. Diagnosed with diabetes at age 13, he also lives with anxiety, asthma, and visual impairment.

About a year ago, his health began worsening. Walking a distance of about eight feet left him exhausted and breathless, with 20 minutes required to catch his breath each time.

A lifelong resident of Aberdeen, Ed is estranged from all but one member of his family, a daughter who lives thousands of miles away in Chicago. He lives alone with his pet cat, Daisy. There was no one to check on him.

Ed attributed his feeling of weakness to low blood sugar. When he checked and found that it was fine, he realized that something else was wrong.

One day when he and his friend Sandy were talking by phone, he mentioned a leaky faucet in his kitchen. To keep



Ed credits coordinated transportation with helping save his life.

the leak at bay, he was keeping his manual dishwasher hooked up to it—permanently. Sandy urged him to call Coastal Community Action, a local social service provider, for their minor home repairs program. In the process, he learned that assisted transportation for medical appointments was also available. Ed used it to schedule a trip to visit his heart specialist, located 100 miles away in Olympia. His doctor promptly scheduled Ed for triple by-pass surgery.

“If it wasn’t for the assisted transportation through the Coastal Community Action Program,” says Ed, “I wouldn’t be here today.”

Coastal Community Action is the lead agency in Grays Harbor for the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT), a statewide community collaboration that made possible the medical transportation Ed used. ACCT offered Grays Harbor a way to build a cohesive rural transportation program for elderly, disabled, and low-income residents who can’t drive to access medical care.

“Claudia”

A series of debilitating conditions caused Claudia DeShazer to lose her mobility four years ago, and she started needing to use a wheelchair. It was a devastating experience for her. LEWIS Mountain Highway Transit offered her some solace.

“I want you to know that this little bus has given me a little bit of my life back,” Claudia writes in a letter of support. “I hadn’t been out of the house in four or five months,” she said about the first time she rode the bus. Being homebound caused her to be “extremely depressed,” and the chance to leave the house “absolutely lifted my spirits.”

On a recent outing, LEWIS Mountain Highway Transit picked Claudia up at her home in Randle, and dropped her off at Jan’s Lost and Found Thrift Shop in Morton. She



Claudia DeShazer explains how increased mobility affects her life.

did some shopping and some visiting there, and then she drove herself in her battery-powered cart to the grocery store, where she was later picked up for her ride home.

Claudia appreciates LEWIS Mountain Highway Transit not only because it gets her places to do her errands, but it also allows her to interact with other people. “I get out for some fresh air, and actually get to talk with other human beings,” she says.

LEWIS Mountain Highway Transit is a recipient of rural mobility grant funding awarded by the Washington State Department of Transportation. The state funding gives rural communities a chance to implement public transportation services in areas where limited or no service is currently available.

Claudia writes, “If this service were stopped, I would just curl up and want to stay that way. I had no idea how much I missed people until I couldn’t get out anymore.”

Rider Tidbits highlights real passengers and their stories of what public transportation means to them. If you want to share a story, please contact the newsletter editor.

New Transportation Resource Available to Low Income and TANF Clients

The Making Connections Program, utilizing Job Access/Reverse Commute (JARC) funding gained by Mason Transit, initiated the first Job Access van in Mason County on March 24, 2003.

According to People For People's Western Region Mobility Coordinator, Angela Barbre, a great aspect of the van is the ability to coordinate other trips in the van. "General public trips can be dispatched to the van when it has capacity and is in the right area. This makes our system more efficient and gives us the ability to serve more people," states Barbre.

By working closely with WorkSource Mason County, the Shelton Community Service Office and other local partners,

Making Connections can provide the much needed, more intense transportation services for our low income citizens

and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients.

The Making Connections Program provides these clients access to education, job training, employment, and job search. By coordinating with various transportation resources and by providing a new resource—the Making Connections van—this job access program has the ability to assist many clients in actively improving their lives.



Driver Danny Stewart prepares to "make connections" for job access clients.

Biodiesel Fuels Olympia Transit Fleet

By Meg Kester, Intercity Transit

Intercity Transit, has begun using a cleaner burning fuel called "biodiesel" in its fleet of 67 buses. Biodiesel is an alternative fuel being used by an increasing number of businesses regionally and nationally. Made from natural, renewable resources such as plant vegetable oils, it produces significantly less air pollution, takes less energy to produce, and is safer for the environment than traditional petroleum-based fuel.

Intercity Transit is using a blend of 20 percent biodiesel and 80 percent diesel. Known as B20, this alternative fuel blend has been shown to reduce particulates by 20 percent, carbon monoxide emissions by 13 percent, and total hydrocarbon emissions by over 10 percent, according to the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy.

Intercity Transit tested use of biodiesel on several of its buses in 2002 and found no operational difficulties. In fact, because biodiesel acts as a fuel lubricant, the agency's Maintenance

Director, Randy Winders, speculates that it may extend the life of bus engine components. Biodiesel fuel can be used in any conventional diesel engine without modification and stored safely anywhere that petroleum diesel fuel is stored.

Particulate levels, regulated under the federal Clean Air Act, are high in the Puget Sound region. Lacey Mayor and Intercity Transit Authority Vice Chair, Graeme Sackrison states, "Intercity Transit's voluntary shift to biodiesel use is being done to address the new

federal emphasis on reducing particulate levels in our area. In the long run, this effort will benefit everyone."

Long-term use of biodiesel will depend upon pricing, availability, and performance.

Intercity Transit is the only transit district in Washington State currently operating its entire bus fleet on this fuel type. Current biodiesel users include the city of Tacoma and McChord Air Force Base. Spokane Transit is currently testing the use of biodiesel.

The Washington State Legislature recently passed four biodiesel bills, 1240-3. The first three bills provide tax incentives to encourage the manufacture, sale, and use of biodiesel and alcohol fuels. The other bill establishes a biodiesel pilot project for school transportation.

For more information on biodiesel, contact the Puget Sound Clean Cities Coalition at (206) 684-0935 or via e-mail at cleancities@seattle.gov.



Joe Wealkley, Intercity Transit Service Worker, fuels a bus with biodiesel and Graeme Sackrison, Lacey Mayor and Intercity Transit Authority member, applauds the use of the cleaner burning fuel.



Gordon Kirkemo Nominated for APTA Award

The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) nominated Gordon Kirkemo for the Distinguished Service Award presented by the American Public Transportation Association. Gordon is an excellent candidate for the award, which recognizes individuals who have made significant contributions to public transportation.



Gordon Kirkemo

Throughout his 28-year career, Gordon Kirkemo distinguished himself as a leading advocate for the advancement of public transportation.

Gordon changed the face of transportation in Washington State through his leadership and vision for public transportation. His noteworthy accomplishments include:

- ❑ helping to create one third of the 26 transit agencies now operating in Washington State;
- ❑ starting the Washington State Public Transportation and Commute Options conference, now in its 27th year;

- ❑ founding the Evergreen State Specialized Transportation Association, now known as Community Transportation Association of the Northwest;
- ❑ creating the Washington State Rideshare Organization;
- ❑ helping shape the Medicaid transportation broker system; and
- ❑ advocating for coordinated transportation in Washington.

Gordon's nomination was supported by his colleagues including: Mike Harbour, President, Washington State Transit Association; Jeanne Ward, Administrator, Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation; Aubrey Davis, Chair, Washington State Transportation Commission; Jim Slakey, former Director, WSDOT Public Transportation and Rail Division; and Dave O'Connell, President, Community Transportation Association of the Northwest.

If selected for the Distinguished Service Award, Gordon will be honored during the Awards Ceremony at the APTA Annual Meeting in Salt Lake City, Utah. Gordon retired from WSDOT last year and will be long remembered for his outstanding contributions.

C-TRAN Announces New *Connector* Service

By Allison Shultz, C-TRAN

In addition to adding over 200 weekly trips throughout the transit system, C-TRAN implemented an innovative small bus service, the *Connector*. The new dial-a-ride service launched in the Vancouver/Camas area on May 12.

Designed in coordination with east county employers such as Sharp Microelectronics, Hewlett Packard, WaferTech, and C-TECH, the reservation-based service operates within a defined geographical area and picks up or delivers passengers to any destination within the service boundary.

The service is available to all citizens traveling within the *Connector* service area in parts of northwest Camas and the Fisher's Landing area. Riders pay the same fare as the regular

bus service and are served on a first-come, first-served basis.

The *Connector* project is partially funded through a federal Job Access/Reverse Commute grant, which was applied for by C-TRAN in coordination with the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services and WorkSource, and was specifically designed to help people get to work and job placement and training opportunities.

"We are extremely excited about the launch of the new *Connector* service," said C-TRAN Executive Director/CEO, Lynne Griffith. "I really think this illustrates C-TRAN's new way of doing



Clark County leaders celebrate the launch of C-TRAN's new Connector service. From left: John McKibbin, Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce President; Lynne Griffith, C-TRAN Executive Director/CEO; Judie Stanton, Clark County Commissioner and C-TRAN Board Member; Helen Gerde, Camas City Councilmember; and Brent Erickson, Camas/Washougal Chamber of Commerce Executive Director.

business. We are responding to feedback we have received from the public in providing smaller buses in our more rural areas. We are listening to our riding customers, taxpayers, and the business community."

Bequest to Metro Will Provide Key Transportation Services for Seniors and Disabled in Southeast Seattle



Lillian Hyde

Lillian Hyde's generosity will soon enable King County Metro Transit to provide new transportation services to hundreds of people living in southeast Seattle.

King County Executive Ron Sims accepted a check for \$403,839 from the estate of Lillian Hyde, a long-time resident of Beacon Hill who died last March at the age of 90. After remembering her friends and family members in her will, she left the remainder of her estate to King County Metro Transit's ACCESS Transportation program.

"By all accounts, Mrs. Hyde was an independent woman, and her gift will bring independence to others by providing more transportation services," said Sims. "The unprecedented gift will become a legacy to provide personalized transportation assistance for seniors and disabled throughout southeast Seattle."

Before her death, Mrs. Hyde used a wheelchair for many years and had often used ACCESS services. "She was very appreciative of the service she got through Metro," said Lucrecia Sanidad. "She told me: 'If Metro ACCESS did not exist, I don't know what I would do about getting around.'"

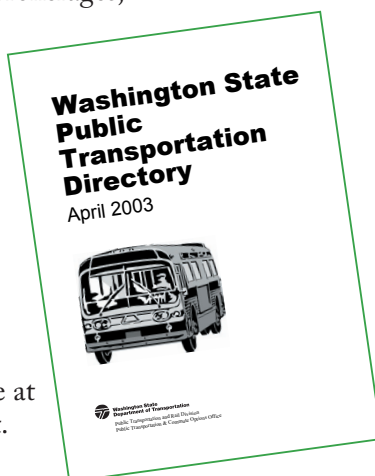


King County Executive Ron Sims accepts a check from Marcos and Lucrecia Sanidad, the co-executors for Mrs. Hyde's estate.

The funds received from Mrs. Hyde's estate will be used for two new demonstration projects serving the elderly and disabled in southeast Seattle. The Lillian Hyde Shuttle will provide free curb-to-curb van service on weekdays during normal business hours and the Travel Advocates and RIDE OPTIONS hotline will provide transportation information and referral service.

The 2003 Public Transportation Directory Is Now Available

The Washington State Public Transportation Directory provides contact information for public transportation partners including transit systems, Medicaid brokerages, specialized transportation, intercity bus operators, government agencies, transportation associations, and planning organizations. The Washington State Department of Transportation produces the directory as a reference tool and publishes it on our web site at www.wsdot.wa.gov/transit. Hard copies are available, while supplies last, by calling (360) 705-7911.

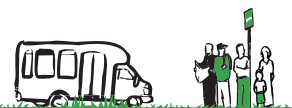


Sharper Focus for ACCT

In order to plan for its next steps, the Agency Council on Coordinated Transportation (ACCT) conducted a survey on its performance and held a retreat to decide how to better achieve their mission of coordinated transportation. One of the results was a sharpened focus of their activities. The legislature endorsed this new work plan in their recently passed transportation budget.

The Council will now direct their efforts on the following:

1. Identify and address barriers to transportation coordination.
2. Establish a work plan with measurable results for state agencies, local coordinated transportation coalitions, and other organizations receiving ACCT funds.
3. Advocate for the coordination of special transportation needs.
4. Pursue funding opportunities and award coordination, implementation, and demonstration grants to achieve coordination goals.
5. Report progress to the Legislative Transportation Committee each year.





**Washington State
Department of Transportation**

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send your questions and comments via e-mail to transit@wsdot.wa.gov,
or call WSDOT's Public Transportation and Commute Options Office at (360) 705-7911.

Mark Your Calendar

**Washington State Public Transportation and
Commute Options Conference**

August 25-27, 2003
Spokane, Washington
Contact: Debra Mendoza at (360) 705-7923 or
mendozd@wsdot.wa.gov

Washington State Public Transportation Roadeo

August 25-26, 2003
Spokane, Washington
Contact: Joy Rogers at (360) 786-9734 or
joy@watransit.com

Statewide Disability Policy Conference

October 3-4, 2003
Seattle, Washington
Contact: Chris Carnell (360) 438-3168 or
ccarnell@esd.wa.gov

APTA State Public Transit Partnerships Conference

July 13-16, 2003
Albuquerque, New Mexico
Contact: Rich Weaver, APTA (202) 496-4809 or
rweaver@apta.com

APTA Annual Meeting

September 28-October 2, 2003
Salt Lake City, Utah
Contact: APTA's meetings group at (202) 496-4800 or
meetings3@apta.com

MTAP Annual Meeting

December 2003
San Diego, California
Contact: Rachel Beyerle (202) 624-3625 or
rbeyerle@ashto.org